



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

VIEWS ON AMERICAN ART COLLECTIONS EXPRESSED BY DR. WILHELM BODE

Dr. Wilhelm Bode, the distinguished art expert, arrived in this country late in October and left here after having visited our principal private and public art galleries. His opinion of what he saw here will be found extremely interesting, although expressed in quite general terms.

During the latter part of his stay he was ill with gout and when I saw him at the Hotel Astor, he was in bed. Even so, however, an oil painting had been set up on a chair for his inspection and opinion, and scattered over the bed were photographs of paintings concerning each of which one or more queries had been put to him.

In answer to my inquiries Dr. Bode frankly expressed himself as astonished at the beauty and extent of the art collections, both public and private, which he found in the United States. The critic and expert had leave of absence from his post as director of the Royal Museum of Berlin, arrived here in October and promptly began an artistic journey of the country. Owing to his high position in the world of art he was afforded every opportunity for seeing the leading American collections. In them he found many old friends, for he not only knows the works of the great masters as other men know their companions, he also is an expert on whose opinion collectors rely in securing their masterpieces.

Thus the twelve Rembrandts of Mr. Benjamin Altman, and the ten owned by Mr. P. A. B. Widener, of Philadelphia, showed familiar faces to Dr. Bode. It is his opinion that the Rembrandts newly arrived at the Widener galleries constitute three of the finest canvases which the great Dutch painter left for posterity. Two from the Earl of Wimburne's collection, "The Apostle Paul at His Writing Desk" and "The Portrait of a Man," the latter of the same period as "The Syndics," Dr. Bode found hanging, one on either side of the famous Rembrandt landscape, "The Mill." Despite the fact that one foreign critic declares his belief that some other artist than Rembrandt painted "The Mill," the famous expert emphatically reasserted his opinion that there is no ground for doubting the authenticity of this landscape.

Dr. Bode found that Mr. Widener has among his recent acquisitions another canvas by Rembrandt, "The Circumcision," which came from the Earl of Spencer. Otherwise he did not mention any works by name or go into details as to works of art in private galleries, but spoke of the general impression made upon him by his tour.

He was prepared to find in the United States many masterpieces by old masters, well knowing that these had been sold to America out of European collections, and yet he was astonished to find so many. I gathered that he found here at least half a dozen private galleries containing masterpieces of such quality as are to be found only in a few private collections in Europe. The collections he especially mentioned were those of Mr. Henry C. Frick, Mr. Benjamin Altman,

Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan, Mrs. John Gardner, Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer and Mr. Widener. Next to these he mentioned the collections of Mrs. C. P. Huntington, Mr. Otto H. Kahn, of this city, and Mr. C. P. Taft, of Cincinnati, the collections in Montreal and the collection of Mr. Theodore M. Davis, in Newport. Fine taste usually prevailed in the arrangement of the galleries, the pictures being interspersed with tapestries, Oriental carpets, sculptures, bronzes and other works of art of correct and appropriate periods. He found many American houses beautifully arranged and filled with rare pictures and works of art.

From this first trip to this country, in 1893, Dr. Bode knew that there were to be found here many superb examples of the French school and many fine English pictures, but he did not expect to find several private collections of pictures as well as of works of art that deserve to be called veritable museums, because in them nearly all the good masters of the different schools are represented, just as in public galleries in Europe.

Such, especially he found to be the case in the interesting and large collection of Mr. John G. Johnson, in Philadelphia. Mrs. Gardner's collection in Boston he thinks beautifully shown in her interesting house. He found an especially interesting collection of early Oriental carpets in the home of Mr. Charles F. Williams, of Norristown, Pa., and a unique assemblage of early Chinese and Persian art in the possession of Col. Charles L. Freer, in Detroit.

American museums he considers improved in an extraor-

dinary manner since his first visit, which was to the World's Fair in Chicago. The Metropolitan Museum of Art he places at the head of the art movement in the United States, and ranks it high even when compared with the great European museums. It has gained this importance since Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan was elected president of its Board of Trustees and since Mr. Edward Robinson became its director and selected for his staff men like Professor Bashford Dean, Messrs. Lythgoe, Bryson, Burroughs and Dr. William R. Valentiner.

He thinks that the Greek department of the Metropolitan Museum, the rich collection of mediaeval and later objects of art, including the Hoentschel collection and the newly opened Egyptian galleries make a wonderful display even now, and promise an extraordinary development. The Boston Museum's Greek and Japanese collections are still, however, the most interesting in the United States.

Next to New York and Boston, Dr. Bode mentioned the Chicago Art Institute, the fine, though small, museum of the Hispanic Society of New York, the museum at New Haven, the Philadelphia Museum and the Fogg Museum, in Boston. He found other institutions just beginning which he expects will have an important influence—Toledo, Buffalo, Worcester and Detroit—although now of minor importance.

European art directors he said, were interested and he especially so, in observing the generosity of Americans of wealth in giving important collections and large sums of money to public museums.

Dr. Wilhelm Bode, was born in 1845, in the Duchy of Brunswick. He began his career as a lawyer, but in 1869 took up the subject of art and archaeology in Berlin. He was made Director of the department of Christian plastic art in the Berlin Museum in 1880 and of the picture gallery, in 1890. He is now Director of the Kaiser Friedrich Museum.

His works, distinguished for originality and judicious criticism, deal chiefly with the Dutch masters and with Italian and German plastic art since the Middle Ages. His controversy with various critics and experts regarding the authenticity of the wax bust of "Flora" by Leonardo da Vinci, is well remembered.

It is interesting to note that of the great American collectors mentioned by Dr. Bode, all but one or two are Founder Patrons or Associate Patrons of The Lotus Magazine.